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#1
June (Vol II)

VANTAGE™

Information for the Serious Comic Book Investor

GUIDE to SUMMER *picks*

BEST NEW INVESTMENTS **7** FOR THIS MONTH !

PLUS:

- NEW KIDS: Ultraverse, Defiant
- DARK HORSE: Special Section
- DEATHMATE: Are Solar #23 RumorsTrue?
- VALIANT: Big News for X-O & Hard Corps!
- KNIGHTFALL: What's Special About #497?

NATIONAL PREMERE

This summer there's more new comics with investment potential than ever before! Which are the BEST PICKS?

HIDDEN DEATHMATE PICK!

WIN ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!

It's easy to win the VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING TIPMEISTER AWARD! We PROMISE YOU that the VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING will be the COOLEST NOTHING that you will ever see (or not see)! Those of you lucky enough to win NOTHING must promise to keep our secret — don't tell your friends how cool it is.

Here's how to win: Just send us an investing or reading tip. Your tip can be a hidden fact in comics, or even just your opinions on the investment market based on what you've seen at shows and in stores. Or send us a copy of your own homemade reference tool, like an Image Index or Valiant character guide. Anything about comics can help us! Be sure to tell us where you got any info from (a photocopy is best but not necessary)! If we haven't already thought of it (aww, what the heck, maybe even if we have already thought of it), we'll print your name, city, and state ! You will be an official VANTAGE TIPMEISTER! Then we'll mail your GIANT NOTHING straight to you (hope your home is big enough)! Store owners can win a VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING for their store (plus 10 free copies of our latest issue for resale, our little way of showing you that you can always sell more Vantages!— proof of store ownership required)!

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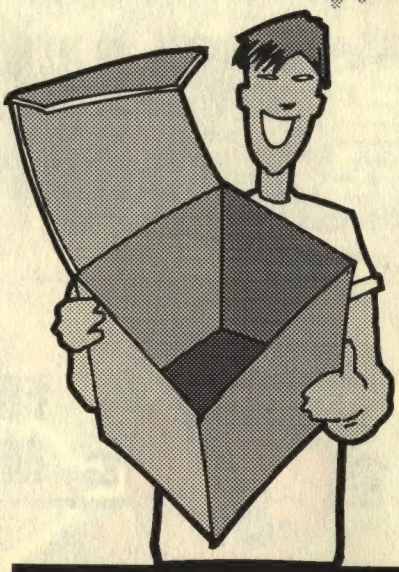

WIN MORE NOTHING!

Help! We need help! Send us a list of 10 gimmick covers in your collection (must be at least six months old) and you may win a GIANT NOTHING! We'll randomly pick a few lucky dogs and print your names in our gimmick issue — Vantage #0! Send in your list with a tip and you double your chances to win! **Don't forget a SASE** so we can send you 100% cool stuff back! Send to address above!

Publisher, Rob Golub. Editor, Tracy Willems. Writing (S.I.), Rob Brett. Admin Assist, John Green. Art Director, Steve Reid. Special thanks to our advisors
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Published by Vantage. Printed on recycled paper. Member, Newsletter Publisher's Association (NPA). Our new phone number is 414-545-3646. Questions, comments, and suggestions are welcome. Address: Vantage, 10238 West National Avenue, #166, West Allis, WI 53227. Subscription information is on the back page. Vantage was founded to bring you more information and fairness. The average collector (as opposed to a large company) has been at a disadvantage for too long.

WHAT IS THIS THING?

"Hmmmm . . ." you say to yourself. You wonder, what is this cute little yellow **Vantage** thing? Then you say, "Self, **Vantage** is THE new source for serious, no-frills comic book investment and reading information." Right! **Vantage** finds out what the publishers are planning and what the professionals are thinking — then we bring it all to you for one measly buck (the best deal in comics!). We seek to bring more fairness to comics by giving the average collector the info he needs to compete with the big boys. **Vantage** gives you honest, unbiased opinions (we don't accept any publishers' ads — <u>you</u> may send us free money, though).

Guess what? **Vantage** is brand-spankin' new — NOT! For months we've been available in Canada and the Northeast. Now we're available in stores all over the U.S. and all over the world (G'day Mates! Did we say that right? That's Australian for hello, right?). Hey — join us wherever you live (even Plasm). Vantage #2 will be available in limited quantities, so let your local store owner know that YOU WANT IT OR YOU WILL DESTROY HIM! (sorry, we've been reading too many comics)

IF YOU HAD $100 TO INVEST THIS MONTH:

Title	Total
Plasm Cards & Binder (Defiant)	17.50
Comics Greatest World (Dark Horse)	17.50
Assorted Knightfall (BM, DT, Azr, Bne)	17.50
Ultraverse #1's assorted (& #0)	12.50
Image Books (Esp. #1's, Spawn)	12.50
Valiant Books (Esp. PC, D-Mate, SW)	12.50
Sabretooth, Deadpool (Marvel)	10.00
Total	$100.00

"The above pick list is a rough guide based on research, advisors' opinions, and staff opinions - keep in mind that even the experts will disagree. We cannot guarantee results. "Hot" comics can lose value after months or years. You would be wise to trade or sell books before they lose value (Vantage will keep you posted on when and how to do this). Read over the facts and opinions in Vantage, examine the pick list, and then make <u>your own</u> investment decisions. Remember: 1) There's no sure thing. Never bet the farm on any one book. 2) Comics may be fun to invest in, but they're even more fun to read! Open up one of those sealed polybags and give comics a try!"

- Publisher Rob Golub

TOP PICK OF THE MONTH:

VALIANT WAS JUST PRACTICE

Defiant Logo © 1993 & TM Defiant

Jim Shooter used to run **Marvel Comics. Get this.** The same dude, Shooter, used to run **Valiant**. Now he starts a new company — Defiant. First Marvel, then Valiant, then Defiant. Does anyone else see a potential pattern here or is it just us?

At age 27 Shooter became editor-in-chief (translation: The Head Honcho) at Marvel Comics. In 1984 he invented the mega-crossover concept with **Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars.** Today, giant crossovers are everywhere. By 1986 Shooter doubled Marvel's sales and had created a permanent place for himself in comics history.

"The dealers watched Shooter build Valiant - many of them believe in Shooter."

Yeah, yeah, that's all cool. **This blows it all away: back in 1989 Shooter co-invented Voyager Communications (Valiant).** It didn't get very much attention and its first titles, dealing with Nintendo games and World Wrestling Federation stompers, didn't exactly take comics by storm. Still, Voyager/Valiant was <u>just</u> getting its feet wet.

With Jim Shooter as "Publisher" (translation: The Big Cheese), Voyager/Valiant launched **Magnus, Robot Fighter** #1 and the Valiant Universe in 1991. Many dealers believed that Valiant was doomed to **small-timeness.** Ha! At first, long before anyone had ever heard of a "Spawn," those early Valiant titles traded mostly among the dealers who had faith in Shooter. Today, that first issue of **Magnus** fetches an easy $30-35 at the shows, and Valiant is still growing strong. Last summer due to a contract dispute, Shooter left Valiant.

Today, Jim Shooter starts a company named after his new attitude — in spite of his past, Jim Shooter is Defiant. Shooter tells us, "I view my career up until now as a series of rough drafts for what we're going to do with Defiant."

The key to back issue value in comics is belief. People must believe that a company's books will gain value, or else the books will not gain any value at all. You could write and draw the world's finest comic, but the sad truth is that if people don't believe that your company's comics could gain value, then they won't pay more than cover for it . . . and prices wont go up. Shooter's reputation is creating belief. Just about every dealer in the industry knows who Shooter is and what he did with Valiant, and many of them will get behind **Defiant.**

If you have a copy of **Magnus,**

Robot Fighter #1, open it up. Look at the beautiful array of pastel colors! Look how the color pallet of this book just completely jumps out at you! Now open up a more recent Valiant, say **Rai and the Future Force** #9. See how the colors aren't quite as bright and aren't quite as beautiful? In Magnus, Valiant's former Design Director Janet Jackson had used a beautiful color scheme to help create what Janet calls a "utopian-looking world." Today Valiant colorists seem to be trying to copy Janet, falling short of the real thing. Now she's Creative Director at Defiant and she'll be using similarly brilliant colors to make Defiant comics just as appealing. She'll start with a fantastic pastel color scheme for Defiant's **Plasm**.

Janet Jackson isn't the only Valiant talent at Defiant. Shooter has multiple former Valiant staffers. Shooter insists, "The story is the star at Defiant and I've assembled the best talent I know in the industry to help me maintain this absolute focus on story. The trick is to get them working together. I consider myself an orchestra conductor."

Go inside your brain. Find the "on" switch and flick it up. You're gonna need it for this one.

Okay, now picture another dimension where things are really different. No, we mean REALLY DIFFERENT! This other universe has the same natural laws as ours — gravity and all of that. The big difference is that everything is alive. Even the machines are alive! This strange place where technology is organic is ruled by a single giant empire called Plasm (Fun! Vantage loves Roman-type empires!).

Plasm soldiers, Zombots (Zombies and Robots? Not the most creative name, but it'll do.), all think of themselves as one entity. For Plasm, the individual is unimportant. One Plasm life is unimportant, as long as all of Plasm lives on.

One dude, Lorca (Loqutis?), is high-ranking enough in the Plasm Empire to have a mind of his own. Get this — Lorca's a rebel. No, no, he's not a dead-head. He just thinks people should be individuals, not unthinking parts in the big organic machine.

In **Plasm** #1 Lorca discovers our dimension and tries to bring 10,000 earthlings to Plasm for a revolution. Only five survive the trip, and they acquire new powers thanks to Lorca.

While Jim Shooter's career may be very successful overall, we can't tell you that everything he's ever touched has been a dream. For example, **Marvel Secret Wars** sold very well with skillfully orchestrated hype behind it in the 1980's. However, the art was really bad, the storyline was worse, and it didn't do well as a back-issue. Some advisors fear the same fate for Defiant. Still, *the dealers watched Shooter build Valiant — many of them believe in Shooter, and the dealers are a powerful force in the back issue market.* Many dealers will recommend Defiant to customers.

The first offering from Defiant, **Plasm** #0 (a card set that can be put together to make a comic) is prelude to next month's Plasm #1. The cards are sold as packs with suggested retail price of 99¢. Plus: a binder to

hold **Plasm** #0 — it comes with a Plasm Zero Trading Card and a short comic (should be overlooked).

If you live in a part of the U.S. where retailers and readers order from **Previews** you'll find that **Plasm** is heavily hyped and it's in the "Defiant" section. However, many people will order from other catalogs where **Plasm** is buried in the card section, it's not a "Gem of the Month" (or anything similar), there's hardly any hype, and it's listed under "The River Group" (the card maker). This should help to keep orders lower and build rarity. For investing, **Plasm** could be the opportunity of the summer. It sounds like a fascinating read as well. Pick it up.

the SPECIAL REPORT:

VALIANT AND IMAGE

Okay, okay, we know. You're sick of hearing about some little company you've never heard of. You want to know, where's the beef? Well then here it is — our special report on the new two.

The big question on everyones minds seems to be this — what's the future of these two companies? We put this question to our advisors and here's what we got —

The general consensus seems to be that Image and Valiant, as least for this summer, should do very, very well. Although demand for Image and Valiant back issues has dipped in some parts of the U.S. (especially the more expensive books), Vantage believes this is only temporary. The Image/Valiant back issue market should get a nice, big, fat healthy PUSH from **Deathmate.**

Deathmate is going to be big. REALLY, REALLY BIG! Vantage wonders if it will be bigger in Australia since it has the word "mate" in it. For those of you who been on the moon for the past couple months, **Deathmate** is a miniseries that will be jointly produced by Image and Valiant. With the two hottest publishers in comics behind it, **Deathmate** will be "THE" event of the summer. PLUS to pump it up: A 30-second animated cartoon commercial (on the Sci-Fi channel) featuring the characters from **Deathmate**; three different Clinton-style bus tours with creators from both companies (will they eat Big Macs too?); zillions of ads in the industry mags.

There's a rumor going around that **Solar** #23 (soon to come out) will be important in the **Deathmate** storyline. The idea is that Solar splits

*"With the two hottest publishers in comics behind it, **Deathmate** will be 'THE' event of the Summer."*

Valiant Logo © 1993 & TM Voyager Communications

in #23 and the half that chooses to travel into space will eventually meet up with Image's Void in **Deathmate**. According to Valiant this is just not true (although Valiant is considering a miniseries down the line which might tie in with Solar's voyage in #23). The Solar that meets with Void in space (in **Deathmate**) will be, yes, the Solar that went off into space hundreds of years ago in **Rai** #0 — not today's Solar from #23. **Deathmate could seriously affect Rai #0's value.**

Those of you who had hoped to get a hidden golden nugget out the #23 rumor need not despair! There are still two hidden preludes to **Deathmate** that are NOT fake-outs. We're talking about the **Deathmate Promo Comics** which will be bagged with **Advance Comics** #55 and also bound in with **Previews** Vol III, #6. The one with **Previews** will feature an attempt by Archer to kill off Shadowman. Wild Cats' Grifter tries to stop these two Valiant characters and the whole story somehow ties into **Deathmate**. The **AC** #55 story features Solar and Profit.

These **Deathmate** Promo Comics will not be reprinted unless the entire **Deathmate** series is reprinted in one paperback someday. While millions of copies of **Deathmate** miniseries comics will be printed, there will be no more than a couple hundred thousand copies of each of the Promo Comics in existence (which is peanuts for a hot comic). **Previews** wont be available for weeks, but **Advance Comics** #55 is due out now.

THE ULTRAVERSE IS HERE!

Prime © 1993 & TM Malibu

Fifty-nine strangers are riding in a cable car on their way to work when some strange energy surrounds the car and gives each passenger ultrahuman abilities. Some die instantly, their bodies unable to handle the strain. Others feel unaffected, the changes too small to feel. Some become more than human. Six ultra-human strangers together try to solve the secret of their origin! It's **The Strangers**, stars in the new "ultraverse" universe from Malibu!

Check it out — you can get a limited edition **Ultraverse** #0 by sending in coupons from the following books (the first three listed are the **Ultraverse** #1's coming out this

month): Hardcase #1 ($1.95) • Prime #1 ($1.95) • The Strangers #1 ($1.95) • Wizard #23 ($3.95/Mag) • Malibu Sun #26 (Free at your local store).

The Ultraverse has strong investment potential (see "How toCreate Belief", page 11). However, **Vantage** is concerned that **Malibu** will get crowded out by all of the attention focused on the larger publishers. As soon as there is **any indication** of which way the market is headed on Malibu, DH, or Defiant, **Vantage** will let you know.

Hard Case © 1993 & TM Malibu

Strangers © 1993 & TM Malibu

TOP PICK OF THE MONTH:

COMICS' GREATEST WORLD

Starting this month a new "Comics Greatest World" comic will hit the stands each week. Each one introduces a key character in the new "Comics Greatest World" universe from Dark Horse. There will be a total of sixteen comics, from which Dark Horse plans to spin off a continuous series. This month's books will all center around Arcadia, one of four major cities. In Arcadia organized crime and corruption are commonplace — it's a city where anything can be bought or sold, including police and local media.

They've managed to attract some real heavies to "Comics Greatest World" including Frank Miller, Walt Simonson, George Perez, and Paul Chadwick. Although these guys are largely doing covers rather than interiors, **Vantage** has seen some very nice looking samples of art and story from the first few issues. We're impressed. For more see the **"Malibu and Dark Horse Investment Guide"** over there on the last page. Find it? Good.

TOP PICK OF THE MONTH:

HOLY BAT-HYPE, BATMAN!

You've probably heard by now Batman will somehow suffer terribly in **Batman** #500 at the conclusion of the Knightfall storyline. You might not know that DC's crack Publicity Department will be out in full force trying to get newspapers and magazines to give "Batdeath" the same kind of coverage that were given to Superdeath. Batman will also experience a major costume change, which will evolve over time and be completed by #500.

Knightfall began with **Batman** #492 (1st) & **Detective** #659 (2nd), and is continuing with every other issue of **Detective Comics** and **Batman.** The early issues of Knightfall have especially strong investment potential. That's because people were not aware of Knightfall's importance when they came out, or when they were advance-ordered by retailers (Translation: low qty. in print).

Important: DC has announced that **Batman** #497 will feature a JLA #71-72 kind of "overcover" as well as **special** nasty things from Bane. Retailers were not aware of this when they first placed their orders for #497. <u>They have the chance to re-order, but some may miss out, perhaps keeping the print run lower</u>.

Bane will play an important role in the demise of Batman which makes the back-issue **Vengeance of Bane** graphic novel look good. Azrael (1st app: **Sword of Azrael** #1-4) will play a **very important** role as well. Prices vary — shop around.

The success of Superdeath should **greatly assist DC in creating the "belief"** (see Defiant article) **needed for back-issue value.** Careful — if the excitement dies after the summer, so could your books! We'll keep you posted on when and how to unload "Batdeath" if so. (Think: "Gee, **Vantage** is SO COOL.")

Batman and Bat Logo © 1993 & TM DC Comics & Time Warner

VANTAGE QUICKIES

Image Logo © 1993 & TM Image Comics
Shamen's Tears Logo © 1993 & TM Mike Grell

IMAGE: **Shamen's Tears** is by Mike Grell whose superb artwork is surpassed only by his fine storytelling ability. ST could be a real sleeper (Grell's **Warlord** and **Green Arrow:LBH** both took off in the back-issue markets in past years). Underrated Mark Texiera (Ghost Rider, Wolvie) pencils and inks **Union** #1. We are Tex fans! Erik Larson's **Savage Dragon** #1 (continuous series) introduces **Freak Force** which Image hopes will have its own title by the end of fall. This fact was not made clear to advance-orderers. The new **Doom's IV** comic from **Rob Liefeld** is planned to also be a Spielberg movie! (caution — more movies die than live)

VALIANT: Aric temporarily gives up the control ring in **X-O Manowar** #20. In **X-O Manowar** #21 Randy Cartier will begin an adventure as X-O. Original plans for Randy to become "She-God of War" in X-O Month's issue #19 have been cancelled. Randy's 1st: **X-O** #12. **Secret Weapons** #1 looks good although characters rotate in and out — rotation books sometimes have trouble holding long-term interest and collectability. 3 words: **But it's Valiant.** Sources indicate that a **Hard Corps** hero **will die** within the next six months, shedding a new spotlight on this underpublicized Valiant series. Those of you who sell at shows should look into picking up **Unity** sets — they'll fly out of your Valiant bins individually at a nice profit.

MARVEL: Sabretooth Mini #1 (Tex!) looks delicious.

Sabretooth © 1993 & TM
Marvel Entertainment Group

HOW THEY'RE BUILDING BELIEF

Unlike Defiant, there's no well-known figure-head at Malibu or Dark Horse to help create belief that back-issues will gain value by way of reputation. These companies must rely on the same sort of tactics that Jim Shooter used for Valiant. This is the key: Now that back issue bonanzas are no longer confined to Marvel in the minds of the average collector, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE! (Okay, not anything. **Betty's Dream Date With Archie** #1 will not heat up even with fifty #0 coupons, but you get the idea) Seven ways to build belief:

1) Now is the time: This is the key — Thanks to Valiant and Image it is now possible in the minds of collectors for a new universe to gain serious back-issue value. THIS IS UNPRECIDENTED IN COMICS. **THIS MAKES VANTAGE OPTOMISTIC: All three of this month's new universes have strong chances of success, which makes them all top potential investments!**

2) Past success: Some people will think that since Malibu was successful with Image, then Malibu can be successful with its new Ultraverse. Kind of like if you own a VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING, then you must be very awesome. Dark Horse has tremendous respect among dealers for putting out quality comics that can gain value.

3) Heavy advertising: We saw with Valiant that advertising can help create value. Both Malibu and DH are promoting heavily.

4) Make something rare and then create high demand for it: The #0 concept has worked very well for both Image and Valiant. Both #0's and NM-M #1's become hard to find and highly sought after by future readers. Malibu is wise to go with a #0, since we all know it works.

5) Keep the print runs low: The print run for all early issues of Ultraverse and Dark Horse titles will be very low (creates rarity).

6) A tight universe: This increases back issue demand by forcing people to go back to titles they missed. Malibu and DH both plan this. Malibu seems to have a tighter universe in mind though.

7) Good reading: Some strong writers will be working on Ultraverse books. Some top cover-artists on the Dark Horse books. DH one dollar cover prices should help build readership among people sick of paying $2-4 for a comic book. If DH can build a large enough base of readers who want Comics Greatest World back issues, prices should rise. Rising prices could then attract speculators which could really push DH upward. This is the key that could propell DH forward.

Dark Horse Logo © 1993 & TM Dark Horse Comics

GET SERIOUS: SUBSCRIBE!

YUM! **Vantage** is the ONLY publication that takes comicbook investing seriously. Now you can get a special pre-press edition of **Vantage before** your retailer's advance-order deadline!* Plus, you'll get our back-issue tips **before** anyone else! This is a **special service** which we will make available only to a limited number of subscribers. As a bonus, each issue will come OTHER COOL STUFF (?) that the general public doesn't normally get to see -read all about the latest in comics straight from the source! Dealers welcome!

Cool! I understand that I will get a special pre-press copy of VANTAGE and that VANTAGE will make its best effort to get my copy to me before my retailer's ADVANCE ORDER DEADLINE! Plus I get "OTHER COOL STUFF"! I'll make check or M.O. out to VANTAGE, Sub. Dept., 10238 W. National Ave, Ste 166, W. Allis, WI 53227.

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Vantage, Dept. A, Ste 166, 10238 W. National Ave., W. Allis, WI 53227.

❑ Awesome! Send me free info on how to become a Vantage Advisor! Proof of dealership is enclosed.

NAME:_____

ADDRESS:_____

PHONE:_____

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